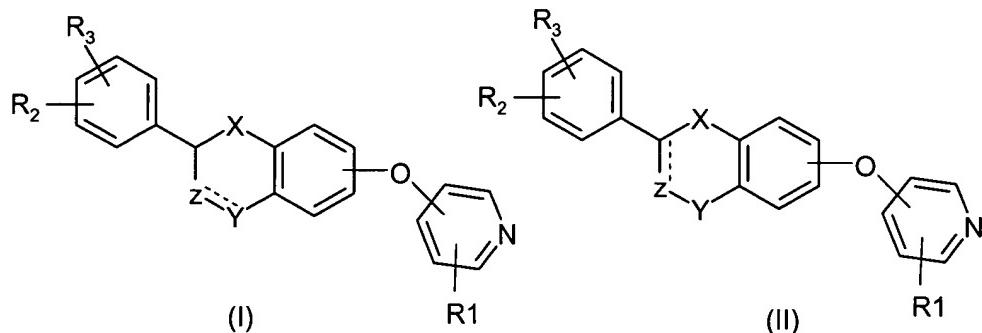


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions of claims in this application.

1. (Currently Amended) A compound Compounds of formula (I) or (II):



wherein

X is -O-, -CH₂- or -C(O)-;

Z is $-\text{CHR}_{12}-$ or valence bond;

Y is $\text{-CH}_2\text{-}$, -C(O)- , $\text{CH(OR}_{13}\text{)-}$, -O- , -S- ;

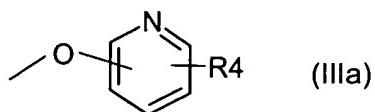
provided that in case Z is a valence bond, Y is not C(O);

the dashed line represents an optional double bond in which case Z is $-CR_{12}-$ and Y is

-CH₂- or -C(O)- or CH(OR₁₀)- (in formula II) or

-CH- (in formula I);

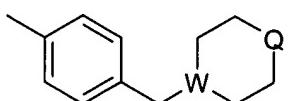
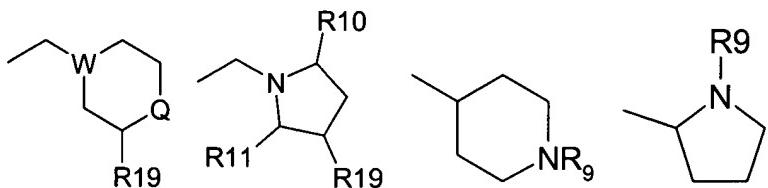
R_2 and R_3 are independently H, lower alkyl, lower alkoxy, $-NO_2$, halogen, $-CF_3$, $-OH$, benzyloxy or a group of formula (IIIa)



R_1 is H, CN, halogen, -CONH₂, -COOR₁₅, -CH₂NR₁₅R₁₈, NHC(O)R₅, NHCH₂R₅, NHR₂₀, NR₂₁R₂₂, NHC(NH)NHCH₃ or, in case the compound is of formula (II) wherein the optional double bond exists or in case R_2 or R_3 is benzyloxy or a group of formula (IIIa) or in case the pyridine ring of formula (I) or (II) is attached to the oxygen atom in 3-, 4- or 5-position, R_1 can also be -NO₂ or NR₁₆R₁₇;

R_4 is H, -NO₂, CN, halogen, -CONH₂, -COOR₁₅, -CH₂NR₁₅R₁₈, -NR₁₆R₁₇, -NHC(O)R₅ or -NHC(NH)NHCH₃;

R_5 is alkyl substituted with 1-3 substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, amino and hydroxy, or carboxyalkyl, in which the alkyl portion is optionally substituted with 1-3 substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, amino and hydroxyl, -CHR₆NR₇R₈ or one of the following groups:



W is N or CH;

Q is CHR₁₄, NR₉, S or O;

R_6 is H or lower alkyl;

R₇ and R₈ are independently H, acyl, lower alkyl or lower hydroxyalkyl;

R₉ is H, lower alkyl or phenyl;

R₁₀ and R₁₁ are independently H or lower alkyl;

R₁₂ is H or lower alkyl;

R₁₃ is H, alkylsulfonyl or acyl;

R₁₄ is H, -OH, -COOR₁₅;

R₁₅ is H or lower alkyl;

R₁₆ and R₁₇ are independently H, acyl, alkylsulfonyl, -C(S)NHR₁₈ or -C(O)NHR₁₈;

R₁₈ is H or lower alkyl;

R₁₉ is H or -OH;

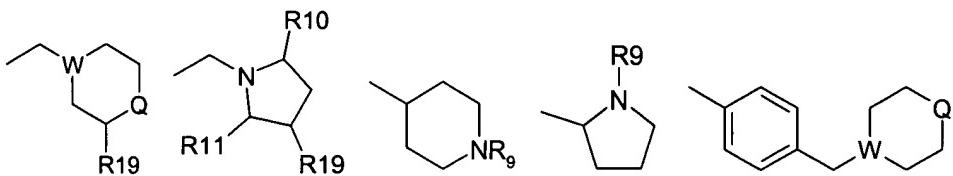
R₂₀ is a pyridinyl group optionally substituted with a -NO₂ group;

R₂₁ and R₂₂ are lower alkyl;

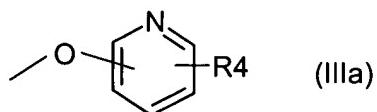
or a and pharmaceutically acceptable salt or ester salts and esters thereof.

2. (Original) A compound according to claim 1 wherein R₁ is -NHC(O)R₅, X is O, Y is CH₂ and Z is CHR₁₂.

3. (Original) A compound according to claim 2 wherein Z is CH₂ and R₅ is alkyl substituted with 1-3 substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, amino and hydroxy, or carboxyalkyl, in which the alkyl portion is optionally substituted with 1-3 substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, amino and hydroxyl, -CHR₆NR₇R₈ or one of the following groups:



4. (Original) A compound according to claim 1 wherein R₂ or R₃ is a benzyloxy or a group of formula (IIIa)



5. (Original) A compound according to claim 4 wherein R₄ is NO₂.

6. (Currently Amended) A compound according to claim 4 or 5 wherein R₁ is NO₂.

7. (Original) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound of claim 1 together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

8. (Original) A method for inhibiting Na⁺/Ca²⁺ exchange mechanism in a cell, comprising administering to a subject in need thereof a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 1.

9. (Original) A method for treating arrhythmias, comprising administering to a subject in need thereof a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 1.

10. (New) A compound according to claim 5 wherein R₁ is NO₂.